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DOES WORKING TOGETHER WORK?  
A STUDY OF COLLABORATION BETWEEN CLASSROOM TEACHERS AND  
SCHOOL LIBRARY MEDIA SPECIALISTS

by  
Carol Elizabeth Miller

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of  
Master of Arts Degree  
of  
The Graduate School  
at  
Rowan University  
May 1, 2006

Approved by

Date Approved May 1, 2006

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## ABSTRACT

Carol Elizabeth Miller  
DOES WORKING TOGETHER WORK?  
A STUDY OF COLLABORATION BETWEEN CLASSROOM TEACHERS AND  
SCHOOL LIBRARY MEDIA SPECIALISTS

2006

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Masters of Arts in School and Public Librarianship

The current research examined the practices of collaboration between teachers and school library media specialists. It also examined what levels of collaboration occurred between the two groups and what factors influenced their decisions regarding use of collaborative activities. Two electronic surveys were designed to give the researcher an idea of teachers' and library media specialists' use or non-use of collaboration and to determine what factors influenced the use or non-use of collaboration. Invitations to participate in the library media specialists' survey were posted using two online forums whose members are media specialists. The participating media specialists were invited to recruit teachers to participate in the teachers' survey.

The overall results indicated that collaboration did occur between the school media specialists and classroom teachers who participated in the study and that most felt satisfied with the results of their collaborative activities.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Statement of the Problem

Previous research has shown that collaboration on teaching and learning activities between teachers and library media specialists had positive results for students (Bishop & Larimer, 1999; Manzo, 2000; Morris, 2004). The purpose of this study was to examine the attitudes and practices of media specialists and teachers to determine if and how attitudes influenced the frequency of use of collaboration and the level of collaboration. Increased understanding of the perceived advantages and disadvantages of collaborative teaching and learning activities has the potential to lead to more effective use of the process. Since research indicated that students benefit from collaboration between teachers and media specialists, improved usage of collaboration can have positive results for students' learning experiences.

#### Relevance of Study

This study was relevant because it added to the knowledge base for teachers, media specialists, and administrators about the benefits of collaboration, as well as detailing some of the obstacles which occurred in the use of collaborative planning. Expanding the body of research results about collaborative efforts can create more effective use of teacher and library media specialist collaboration.

## Research Questions

1. What were the practices of collaboration used by school library media specialists and classroom teachers?
2. What levels of collaboration were used by media specialists and classroom teachers?
3. What factors influenced library media specialists' use of collaboration?
4. What factors influenced classroom teachers' use or non-use of collaboration?

## Definitions

"Attitude- a settled opinion or way of thinking" (Abate, 1996, p. 85).

"Collaboration: ...Refers to the cooperative efforts between teachers and library media specialists to plan, develop, and implement information literacy skills into the classroom curriculum" (McCain and Merrill, 2001). For the purpose of this paper the term collaboration may be used interchangeably with cooperative planning, collaborative planning, collaborative teaching, or collaborative planning.

"Cooperative planning: Collaboration between teachers and library media specialists to integrate information literacy skills into the classroom curriculum. The term is used interchangeably with collaborative planning" (McCain and Merrill, 2001).

"Cooperative teaching: Implementation of information literacy skills into classroom instruction by both the teacher and the library media specialist. The term is used interchangeably with collaborative teaching" (McCain and Merrill, 2001).

"Curriculum: The totality of ideas and activities designed by an educational institution to meet the learning needs of students and to achieve the desired educational goals [or] ...

written plan that states the content of what students will be taught” (McCain and Merrill, 2001).

“Library media specialist: The professional administrator of a library media center who has the appropriate degree and meets the requirements for state certification... School library media specialist is a synonymous term. Library media specialist replaces the term school librarian” (McCain and Merrill, 2001). For the purposes of this research, school librarian is used interchangeably with library media specialist (LMS) and with school library media specialist (SLMS).

“Practice: habitual action or performance” (Abate, 1996, p.1168).

“Teacher: 1. An instructor. 2. A role of the school library media specialist as delineated by Information Power in which the library media specialist collaborates with teachers and students to analyze information and learning needs and to locate resources to be used to meet those needs” (McCain and Merrill, 2001). For the purposes of this study, teacher has been operationally defined as a classroom teacher in grades K-12 in public and private schools.

“Understand: perceive the meaning of... [or] perceive the significance or explanation or cause of” (Abate, 1996, p.1667).

### Assumptions and Limitations

It was assumed that teachers and school media specialists had opinions on the usefulness of collaboration and that they responded honestly to the request for their opinions. It was further assumed that the research subjects had formed their opinions based on education and/or experience. Participants had varying amounts of experience as

educators and different personal educational backgrounds, therefore, it was assumed that the responses were to some degree reflective of those matters.

The small, non-random sample, and the time frame limited the generalizability of the results of the study. If the survey were administered to a different portion of the population, results could be potentially different.



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## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

#### Introduction

There is a saying that it takes a village to raise a child. The days of one room schoolhouses and a solitary teacher are long gone. Now the educational “village” includes principals, teachers, school media specialists, and other school staff. When educators work together as a team, students benefit.

As a result of *Information Power* and the Library Power project, pilot studies and research were conducted on the importance of collaboration and the factors which affect the use of it.

#### *Information Power* and Library Power

“Effective collaboration with teachers helps to create a vibrant and engaged community of learners,” according to *Information Power: Building Partnerships for Learning* (American Association of School Librarians [AASL] & Association for Educational Communications and Technology [AECT], 1998, p.51). *Information Power: Guidelines for School Library Media Programs* was originally published in 1988. A decade later *Information Power: Building Partnerships for Learning* was published and included standards and indicators for use with preK-12 curriculum content. Ten principles of learning and teaching were also included. Four of these principles addressed the topic of collaboration. *Information Power's* (1998) principles and standards have become an authoritative source for media specialists.

*Information Power* (1998) also prompted a national grant project named Library Power. In 1988 DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest formed a grant fund designed to improve media centers in elementary schools. In order to be eligible schools had to "employ a full-time media specialist, to provide matching funds for collection development, and to allow open access to the media center, or flexible scheduling..." (Morris, 2004, p.19). Library Power was intended to promote the use of collaboration between library media specialists and classroom teachers. During its ten year existence, the Library Power grant fund provided schools in 19 communities with a total of \$45 million (Morris, 2004).

#### Action Research and Pilot Studies

As a result of the Library Power initiative many schools participated in "action research projects" (Lange, Magee, & Montgomery, 2003, p. 4). These projects, which were also known as pilot studies, examined how the concepts of Library Power were being implemented in schools.

In the article *Contributions of Library Power to Collaborations Between Librarians and Teachers*, (1999), authors Webb and Doll discussed the findings of several surveys of principals, teachers, and media specialists who were in Library Power schools. Much of the data collected for this article focused on how participation in collaborative teaching had increased in the schools using this initiative. For example, "of nearly 370 principals who responded to an open-ended question regarding the extent and ways in which Library Power affected the collaborative process, 43% gave some response that indicated teachers and librarians had increased their joint planning on instructional units" (Webb & Doll, 1999, ¶14). When principals were asked about

reasons for the improvements, their responses included increased professional development for staff, additional planning time for teachers and librarians, and an increased demand for accountability to administrators.

Webb and Doll also provided a breakdown of five degrees of collaboration. Their levels were: “awareness..., parallel..., coordinated..., interactive..., and shared” (¶11). They defined *awareness* as the times when teachers and librarians had knowledge about the projects or lessons the other was planning. Collaboration was considered *parallel* if the teachers and media specialists were conducting parallel activities but in their own environments. The *coordinated* lessons or units were those in which the teachers and media specialists “coordinate(d) a division of labor and responsibilities for instructional activities in one location such as the library” (¶11). Collaboration in which teachers and media specialists shared equal responsibility for creating and delivering the lesson was labeled as *interactive*. The level of *shared* was defined as when librarians and teachers “share(d) full responsibility for their own learning and the learning of students” (¶11). A survey was conducted in order to examine which levels of collaboration were occurring. During the 1996-97 school year, a questionnaire was sent to media specialists in 485 schools. From that population 60 schools were randomly selected. Thirty-five of those were provided with collaboration logs into which 157 activities were reported. The activities were then analyzed to determine which of the five degrees of collaboration had occurred. The results indicated that none of the reported activities were at level 1 (awareness) or level 5 (shared). Parallel collaboration accounted for 3% of the activities, 82% of the activities were labeled as coordinated, and 5% were judged as interactive. Ten percent of the activities were not categorized because of insufficient information.

(Webb & Doll, 1999). Webb and Doll's article provided data about how schools were utilizing the Library Power program in their own climates and curriculums in order to increase collaboration.

Similarly, authors Bishop and Larimer stressed the importance of collaboration in their article *Literacy Through Collaboration* (1999). Bishop and Larimer focused on the question "how can teachers and teacher-librarians work collaboratively to promote literacy and authentic learning experiences for students...?" (§7). They sought answers by examining the Library Power program in the public schools of Lincoln, Nebraska (Bishop & Larimer, 1999).

Examples of programs being utilized in the Lincoln schools included author visits, reading incentive programs, and use of creative expression units. In these activities, teachers and media specialists worked together to increase student literacy. Collaboration also occurred when the school system produced a booklet titled "Guide to Integrated Information Literacy Skills". The book was designed for use by all preK-12 grades and was created by a team comprised of 33 teachers, librarians, and administrators (Bishop & Larimer, 1999).

Bishop and Larimer (1999) also examined factors that "facilitate successful collaboration between teacher-librarians and classroom teachers" (§28). One of the primary factors they identified was flexible scheduling. Their results showed that the grants from Library Power funded increased time for collaborative planning. Teachers and media specialists who did not collaborate often gave lack of time as a reason. Having the time to plan was also related to another key factor: administrative support.

Respondents indicated that collaboration was more likely to occur when their principals and administrators encouraged it (Bishop & Larimer, 1999).

Muronaga and Harada (1999) agreed that environmental and external elements, such as scheduling and principal support affected the use of collaboration, but their article *Building Teaching Partnerships: The Art of Collaboration* focused more on the “internal factors influencing the collaborative relationship” (§3). Muronaga’s position as media specialist at Lincoln Elementary School in Honolulu, Hawaii was the basis for a project which examined how team-building occurred at their K-6 school.

The authors reported that collaboration at Lincoln Elementary was fostered by the library media specialist understanding how and why teachers plan. The LMS exhibiting a willingness to use the teachers’ methods of planning established a “climate of trust and mutual respect” (Muronaga & Harada, 1999, §5). Other factors that facilitated successful collaboration included planning an interactive meeting with each team of teachers at the start of each semester and writing thank you notes and bulletins to acknowledge the teachers’ contributions. The article’s suggestions for improving collaborative interactions between classroom teachers and library media specialists exemplified one benefit of pilot studies.

Another purpose of action research and pilot projects articles was to offer different perspectives. For example, in *Reflections of an Empowered Library* (2002), author Faye Pharr presented information from a principal’s point of view. Pharr’s school, Lakeside Academy of Math, Science, and Technology was the topic of discussion. The magnet school located in Chattanooga, Tennessee received a Library Power grant in

1994. As a result of that grant “the library changed from a resource center to a center of instruction, exploration, and learning” (Pharr, 2002, ¶4).

The media center changed to flexible scheduling and the principal instituted collaboration policies for all library projects. Pharr reported that after only one year results showed “a direct correlation between library usage and improved test scores” (2002, ¶8). Even so, the principal admitted that not all teachers were enthusiastic about collaborating. The author emphasized the importance of monitoring faculty’s adherence to the policy and stressed the benefits of having teachers and school librarians working together.

### Research

Research by van Deusen and Tallman (1994) indicated that scheduling and the “planning culture” of a school were two elements that factor into the use or non-use of collaboration in a school. In *The Impact of Scheduling on Curriculum Consultation and Information Skills Instruction: Part One of the 1993-94 AASL/Highsmith Research Award*, the pair examined the impact of fixed, flexible, and mixed scheduling on the practice of collaboration. They also studied how the “planning culture” affected schools’ use or non-use of collaborative efforts between classroom teachers and library media specialists.

To conduct this study van Deusen and Tallman collected data using a questionnaire, which was sent to 1,500 elementary library media specialists. The population for this study was obtained from Market Data Retrieval, a marketing firm specializing in the education field. The criterion was designed to include only media specialists in schools where at least three grades were taught, one of which had to be

either the third or the fourth grade. From the initial population, 502 media specialists agreed to participate. Seventy-nine percent (397) of that group returned the questionnaires, 18 of which were not usable.

For a six-week period (October 4 – November 12, 1993), the respondents were asked to maintain record of the units in which they participated as either “a curriculum consultant or as a teacher” (p. 18). The concept of curriculum consultation was broken down into five possible tasks, which were: “Gather materials for a classroom unit (Gather); ...Collaborate with the teacher in the design of the objectives of a classroom unit (Identify); ...Collaborate with the teacher in the design of teaching/learning activities (Plan); ...Teach the unit collaboratively with the teacher (Teach); ...Collaborate with the teacher in evaluating the unit (Evaluate)” (p.19). Participants were provided with a glossary to define the terms used. In addition the survey had questions regarding the time allotted for meeting with teachers, their principal’s expectations; and about the “planning culture” in their schools (van Deusen & Tallman, 1994).

The researchers also asked whether the library was on a fixed, flexible, or mixed schedule. Van Deusen and Tallman found that participants on flexible schedules were more likely to perform any of the five tasks than were their counterparts who were on mixed schedules. Similarly, media specialists in schools with mixed schedules were more likely to participate in the five studied roles than were those working in fixed-schedule schools.

In the second portion of this study, the researchers examined how the planning culture affected collaboration. The team used two variables: *expectation* and *meet*. The expectation variable was described as “a measure of the principal’s expectation for



teachers to plan collaboratively with the library media specialist” (p.20). The results indicated that in schools where the principal’s expectations for collaboration were higher, more curriculum consultation between media specialist and teachers occurred. The variable “meet” was designed to measure media specialists’ planning activities. The librarians could indicate that they met with teachers individually, as part of a group or team, or not at all. Again, researchers found that when the media specialists had meetings with teachers, more collaboration took place. The results indicated that library specialists’ meetings with teams or groups of teachers created more collaboration units than did one-on-one meetings between a teacher and a media specialist (van Deusen & Tallman, 1994).

The findings of this study supported the theory that a principal’s positive attitude toward collaboration, along with sufficient planning opportunities between teachers and librarians, can increase the utilization of collaborative instruction.

Researchers Tallman and van Deusen continued their 1993-94 study and in part three, titled *Collaborative Unit Planning – Schedule, Time and Participants*, they examined the units of study in which library media specialists worked with classroom teachers, either as a consultant or as a teaching partner. For six weeks the 381 participating media specialists logged the units they worked on with teachers. They also tracked the time spent on the planning activities involved in the process. A total of 3,056 units were reported (Tallman & van Deusen, 1994).

Results showed that media specialists in flexible-schedule environments planned collaboratively with teachers on 62% of their units. Only 22% of the units reported by the media specialists in fixed-schedule libraries included collaborative teaching (Tallman

& van Deusen, 1994, p. 33). Some questionnaires were returned blank with notes from the library media specialists indicating that there was “no planning time” in which to work collaboratively (p. 34).

Planning on the majority of units (63%) involved a single meeting between the classroom teacher and library media specialist. Analysis indicated that meeting times ranged from five minutes or less (67 units) to more than 30 minutes (530 units). Tallman and van Deusen concluded that “Perhaps the best scenario for implementation of the consultation and teaching roles defined in *Information Power* (1998) includes flexible scheduling, with a full-time certified library media specialist who meets with teams of teachers to plan for instruction” (1994, p.37).

Similarly, research by Lance, Rodney, and Hamilton-Pennell (2005) supported the importance of having a full-time librarian who has time for collaborative planning. Several research projects led by Lance were cited by many experts, included in Scholastic’s Research Foundation Paper *School Libraries Work*, and presented at the 2002 White House Conference on School Libraries (<http://www.imls.gov/pubs/whitehouse0602/whitehouse.htm>).

In their Illinois Study, titled *Powerful Libraries Make Powerful Learners*, which was funded, in part, by the Illinois School Library Media Association, the team examined the relationship between “various dimensions of school libraries and appropriate indicators of academic achievement” (Lance, Rodney, & Hamilton, 2005, p. ii). During the fall of 2003, voluntary surveys were collected from the media specialists of 657 schools throughout Illinois. All grade levels were represented.

Results from Lance, et al., observed that when library media specialists at the high school level spent time collaborating with teachers ACT scores increased “an average of three to four percent over the scores for schools with less collaborative library staff” (2005, p. vi).

The team also noted that media specialists in a high school were more likely to have support staff which in turn allowed them more time to work with teachers on planning and instruction. “The more time (high) school librarians spend engaged in such activities, the higher their students’ test scores” (Lance, Rodney, & Hamilton, 2005, p. 120). The researchers posited that Teacher-LMS collaboration increased test scores at all grade levels.

In the spring of 2003, doctoral candidate Leatrice Joy Bailey (2005) conducted a survey of school media specialists in Texas. For her dissertation research, she focused on elementary schools which had been rated exemplary by Texas Education Agency (TEA) in 2002, thus giving them a ranking of “academically successful” (p. 3). The rating was based on results of the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS).

Bailey found that 1,248 K-12 schools throughout Texas were considered exemplary. That number was used as the beginning population, although the report indicated that the data were to be collected from elementary schools only. Web-based surveys were sent to participants who had email addresses listed. Surveys and a letter requesting their participation were sent by mail to those who did not have an email address on record. After eliminating schools that either had no media specialist listed or those whose emails were returned as undeliverable, the population size was counted at 820. Two-hundred eighty nine responses were received. Of that group, sixteen media

specialists indicated that they served multiple schools. Their responses were included with no differentiation from those serving only one school. In total, 272 librarians participated in Bailey's research (2005, p.38).

Bailey's questionnaire included 12 questions. Most of the questions were structured, although several invited the respondents to check all applicable choices. Three questions asked participants to give a number (of the teachers and staff in the building and the circulation numbers from the previous year). The questions were designed to collect data for three specific areas: "library resources, library program, and school climate" (Bailey, 2005, p. 33). Bailey's focus was on the topics of "collaboration, scheduling, staffing, budget, Internet access, online resources, and principal support" (p.34).

Bailey (2005) opined that flexible scheduling must be implemented in order to meet library standards and that clerical support is imperative for successful flexible scheduling. Her findings indicated, however, that only 61% of the studied schools employed clerical support for the media centers. She recommended enlisting principal and administrator support by educating them on the importance of clerical library support staff.

In regards to principals' support of the libraries, Bailey found that their expectations for collaboration were low. Only 59% of the respondents' principals expected collaboration to occur. Forty-five percent of the principals required school research projects and only 38% of the principals of these academically successful schools expected both collaboration and research projects (Bailey, 2005). Bailey emphasized the need for improvement in that area. "Considering the strong link between collaboration

and student achievement, the principals need to be more proactive in this area,” (2005, p. 78).

Another focus of Bailey’s research was the librarians’ perceived use of collaboration. The results of Bailey’s study indicated that only 20.8% of the library media specialists surveyed reported collaborating with teachers to integrate information literacy instruction and skills. An additional 22.3% said “that teachers directed the librarians’ lessons with input but did not plan with them” (Bailey, 2005, p. 81). Bailey noted that the participants’ reasons for lack of collaboration were often: “issues of time and different teachers want(ing) different things” (2005, p. 81).

Gaining media specialists’ input about the components of successful collaboration was the basis for research by Carol Brown (2004). Brown used a variety of methods to gather data. Three focus groups in North Carolina were interviewed with open-ended questions. The three groups were comprised of 1) elementary and secondary level teacher-librarians from urban schools; 2) recipients of a public school/public library partnership grant; and 3) K-12 school librarians who were attending a conference. In addition, Brown sent electronic surveys “to graduate students enrolled in the Master of Library Science and the Master of Education programs at a large regional university in the eastern United States” (Brown, 2004, ¶7). Previous members of a planning team, who were also recipients of a Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant, participated in telephone interviews. Lastly, queries posted to LM\_Net Listserv, an online forum group for school librarians, were utilized for collecting data from school media specialists from outside the state of North Carolina. Brown’s report indicated that 24 responses were received from the LM\_Net source and that a total of 66 documents

were reviewed. Information regarding the breakdown of the remaining 42 responses was not provided.

The respondents from each group were asked to describe their “most successful collaborative project,” why they thought it was successful, and “what contributed to the success” (Brown, 2004, ¶9). The report did not include a breakdown of all responses, but it did categorize the responses into two groups: *environmental factors* and *social factors*. Brown described the environmental factors as “overt and attributed to conditions and policies within the school,” (¶9). Elements such as flexible scheduling, administrative support, and planning meetings were included under the heading of environmental factors. Brown reported that “a majority of responses favored regularly scheduled meetings at a specific time and place” (¶11). Similarly, flexible scheduling was present in the majority of the success stories.

The social factors were considered “covert and similar to the qualities that lead to social intelligence as described by the early writers involved in training the school librarian” (¶9). Brown included communication, trust, confidence in one’s own ability, and team leadership in her list of social factors. She noted that participants tended to have more positive collaboration experiences when teachers volunteered than when collaboration was required by school policies.

Although the data and results of the study were unclear, Brown’s study did identify and discuss factors that contributed to successful collaboration. The researcher observed that

“by adopting the attributes of proactive (but flexible) leadership, trust, shared vision, open communication and self-confidence in one’s contribution, teacher-

librarians may be able to circumvent environmental issues not under their control. Lack of administrative support, time limitations and rigid schedules may remain as obstacles, but proactive and positive attitudes are more likely to reach that most-wanted group – teachers who will collaborate” (Brown, 2004, ¶47).

Teaching information literacy and technology skills are services frequently provided by library media specialists. In their 2005 study, Brewer and Milam examined how collaboration and technology instruction coincide. In February 2005, 2,000 questionnaires were mailed to randomly selected media specialists. Web-based surveys were posted from the beginning of February until the middle of March. The research team invited members of a special interest group of media specialists from the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) to participate. The invitation was also posted on LM\_Net, a school librarian online discussion forum. Additionally, over 1,200 media specialists were notified of the Web survey. Web responses were received from 1,308 people. A total of 1,571 surveys were collected from K-12 librarians who represented all 50 states.

Although the report did not detail the questions asked, the authors stated that “...60 percent collaborate with teachers in the effort to integrate technology resources into classroom learning, and 67 percent help plan technology programming at their school” (Brewer and Milam, 2005, ¶1). Some study participants indicated making time for collaboration “is one of the biggest challenges” (¶14). Other participants noted that their wide range of responsibilities made the use of collaboration more difficult. Even so, researchers found that 84% of the respondents were involved with instructing teachers on

the use of technology while 95% indicated that they provide the technology instruction for their schools.

### Summary

The publication of *Information Power* first published in 1988 and again in 1998, and the Library Power initiative which operated from 1988 to 1998, were two major influences in the increased focus on utilization of collaborative teaching (Zweizig & Hopkins, 1999). Many articles described the action research or pilot projects created as a result of the DeWitt Wallace – Reader’s Digest grant fund. Those articles, and subsequent ones, published in publications such as *Teacher Librarian* and *Knowledge Quest* offered details and suggestions for increased usage of collaborative planning and instruction.

Research on the topic of collaboration has, however, been somewhat limited. The studies and research examined indicated that collaboration has been shown to improve students’ academic performance (Lance, et al., 2005; Bailey, 2005). Despite these findings, researchers discovered that collaboration still was not fully utilized (Tallman & van Deusen, 1994; Bailey, 2005). Experts indicated that the two most common obstacles to collaborative teaching were lack of time and fixed scheduling (Tallman & van Deusen, 1994; Bailey, 2005; Brewer & Milam, 2005). Principals’ support, flexible scheduling and adequate planning time were found to be factors which had a positive affect on the use of collaboration (Tallman & van Deusen, 1994; van Deusen & Tallman, 1994; Bailey, 2005; Brown, 2004).



Overall, the research and pilot studies indicated that the educational community had improved its use of collaboration but still has obstacles to overcome in order to maximize the benefits of collaborative teaching.

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## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

#### Research Design

This study was designed to examine the factors which influenced the use of collaboration between library media specialists and classroom teachers. The researcher chose descriptive survey research as the method for data collection. In *Basic Research Methods for Librarians*, authors Powell and Connaway advised that descriptive surveys were appropriate to “test associational relationships” and for exploring “causal relationships” (2004, p. 87).

#### Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to examine the attitudes and practices of media specialists and teachers to determine if and how attitudes influence the frequency of use of collaboration and the level of collaboration. Increased understanding of the perceived advantages and disadvantages of collaborative teaching and learning activities has the potential to lead to more effective use of the process. Since research indicated that students benefit from collaboration between teachers and media specialists, improved usage of collaboration can have positive results for students’ learning experiences.

Research questions that were answered through data gathered from this study included:

1. What were the practices of collaboration used by school library media specialists and classroom teachers?

2. What levels of collaboration were used by media specialists and classroom teachers?
3. What factors influenced library media specialists' use of collaboration?
4. What factors influenced classroom teachers' use or non-use of collaboration?

### Population and Sample

The sample for this study was selected from a population of library media specialists and classroom teachers from public and private schools. Because collaboration with teachers of very young students (preK-2<sup>nd</sup> grades) was expected to differ from that of teachers of older students, one original criterion for the research was that teachers and media specialists worked with grades 3-8. It was, however, determined that gathering data from all grades would allow the researcher to examine the patterns through the different grades. Therefore, teachers and media specialists from all grades were included in the sample.

The population and sample for the research was the same. In order to compare teachers' and library media specialists' responses, the population and sample was comprised of two groups: library media specialists and classroom teachers. Library media specialists serving grades preK-12 comprised the first group. The second group was comprised of teachers who were invited to respond by the participating library media specialists. To recruit volunteer participants to both groups an invitation to participate was posted to the online forums of the New Jersey Association of School Librarians (NJASL) and the national listserv LM\_Net. NJASL was an online discussion group for K-12 school media specialists in New Jersey. Membership to the Yahoo group was required in order to read or respond to messages posted on the forum. The group was formed in October 2001 and in December 2005 had 364 members

(<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/NJASL/>). LM\_Net was an online discussion group designed for library media specialists. The forum included “over 16,000 subscribers from at least 65 countries” ([http://www.eduref.org/lm\\_net](http://www.eduref.org/lm_net)). From the membership of the two online forums 41 media specialists volunteered to participate. Two responses were deemed unusable due to failures by the participants to complete the survey. Each volunteer was asked to invite three-to-five classroom teachers in their school to participate in a parallel online study that was designed for data collection from classroom teachers. A total of 19 classroom teachers volunteered to participate and comprised the second group of the population and sample.

### Variables

Independent variables determine or produce a change in the dependent variable. The dependent variable is that which can be measured. In this study, the independent variable was the library media specialists’ and classroom teachers’ attitudes towards the use of collaboration. The dependent variables were the frequency of collaborative teaching experiences and the levels of collaboration between the classroom teachers and the library media specialists.

### Data Collection

For this research, data were collected via Web surveys posted on SurveyMonkey, an online survey Web site (<http://www.surveymonkey.com>). SurveyMonkey is a commercial Web site that allows researchers to create and post surveys. Respondents answered questions via a Web survey. SurveyMonkey was selected for this research because it allowed multiple surveys with an unlimited number of questions. It also included a feature for randomizing answer options that minimized the unintentional bias

effects potentially created by question order. The links to the two parallel surveys were posted on NJASL on February 1, 2006. The invitations to participate (Appendix A) were posted on the NJASL listserv on February 1, 2006 and again on February 9, 2006. An invitation to participate with links to the surveys (Appendix B) was posted on LM\_Net listserv on February 9, 2006. The surveys were open from February 1, 2006 until March 4, 2006.

### Questionnaire Design

Two online surveys were designed to give the researcher an idea of participants' use or non-use of collaboration and to determine what factors influenced the use or non-use of collaboration. The first questionnaire (Appendix C) was a 12-question survey for library media specialists. The survey was used to gather data about media specialists' practices of and attitudes towards collaboration. The second survey (Appendix D) was a 12-question survey designed to collect similar data from classroom teachers who collaborated with the school library media specialists.

Structured questions were used to collect demographic data including employment status and length of time in current position, as well as to examine participants' collaboration experience. Similarly, structured questions were utilized to obtain respondents' opinions regarding what elements assist or impede the collaboration process. The questions on elements included an option to mark "other" and "specify" in order to collect information that might not have been included in the structured responses. Likert scale questions were used to measure subjects' satisfaction with collaborative experiences and to determine how often collaboration occurred. One question (how would you rate your previous or current collaborations?) utilized a Likert scale and

offered respondents an opportunity to include comments. Questions 8a through 8e were based on research conducted by van Deusen and Tallman (1994).

### Reliability and Validity

The survey designed for media specialists was pretested by several media specialists who were colleagues of the researcher. The teachers' survey was pretested by several colleagues who taught grades 3-8. Media specialists and teachers who assisted with the pretest were not participants in the survey.

The reliability of the study was limited by the sample and population. Results of any Web-based survey are limited to a population who utilizes online technology. The invitation to join was posted on an online forum for media specialists in New Jersey and on an international listserv for media specialists. Members of the profession who did not subscribe to either forum or belong to either group would not have received notification of the invitation. The results and conclusions of this study were valid for the sample participants only.

This research could be replicated in other states with educational systems similar to that of New Jersey. The results of the study were useful in gaining an increased understanding of the relationship between library media specialists' and teachers' attitudes towards collaboration and their participation in collaborative activities.



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## CHAPTER IV

### ANALYSIS OF DATA

#### Response Rate

An email message was posted to the NJASL listserv on February 1, 2006. The message included a link to an electronic survey posted on SurveyMonkey.com. On February 9, 2006 the message was posted for the second time on the NJASL listserv and also on a second listserv, LM\_Net. A total of 41 library media specialists responded to the survey designed for library media specialists. Two of the surveys received from library media specialists were unusable because the respondents did not indicate the grade levels in their schools. Nineteen teachers responded to the survey designed for classroom teachers.

#### Data Coding and Adjustments

The surveys remained open on SurveyMonkey until March 4, 2006. The library media specialists' responses were then sorted into three categories: elementary schools, secondary schools, and schools that were grades preK-12. Seventh and eighth grade schools were included in the elementary school classification if they were stand-alone schools or were the last two grades of an elementary school. If the seventh and eighth grade classes were in a school that included grades 7-12 or 8-12, they were counted with the secondary schools. The teachers' responses were categorized in the same way. The responses received from teachers and media specialists in elementary schools were coded as school level 1. Responses received from secondary schools were coded as school level

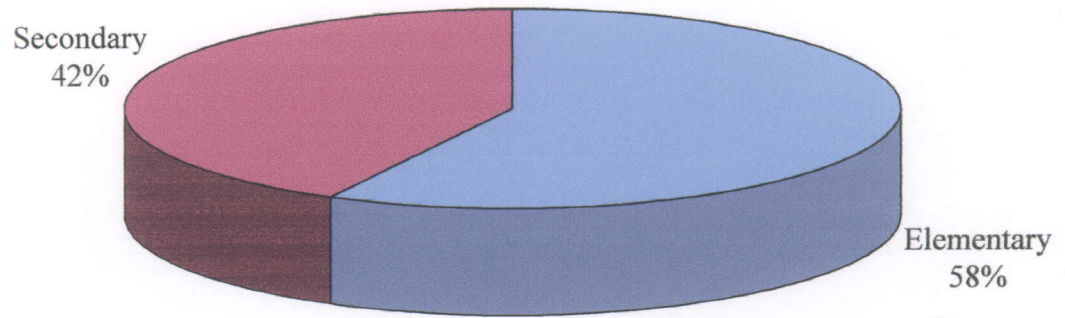
2. The responses received from media specialists in schools that were preK-12 were coded as school level 3. No teachers from a preK-12 school responded. The surveys completed by library media specialists were analyzed separately from those completed by classroom teachers.

Data were retrieved and analyzed from SurveyMonkey and then coded and entered into the computer spreadsheet program Excel. The Excel program was utilized to compute descriptive statistics, find percentages and create bar graphs and pie graphs.

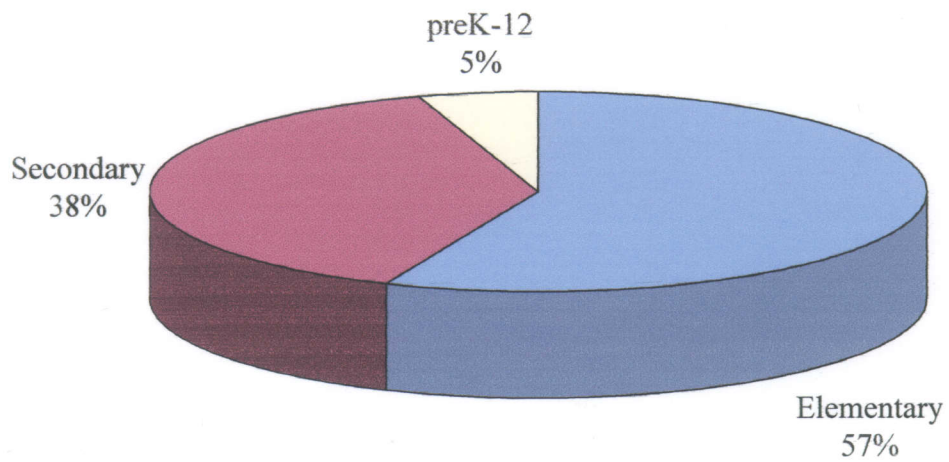
### Presentation of Results

Two surveys were administered. The survey designed for teachers included twelve questions. The parallel survey for media specialists also included twelve questions. Questions in both surveys were designed to be similar. The first question on both surveys asked the respondents what grade levels attended their schools. Nineteen teachers responded. Eleven (58%) of the teachers were in an elementary school and eight (42%) were in a secondary school as shown in Figure 1a. Thirty-nine library media specialists answered the same question, as shown in Figure 1b. Twenty-two of the respondents (57%) were in an elementary school. Fifteen respondents (38%) were in a secondary school. Two of the respondents (5%) were in preK-12 schools.

**Grade Levels (Teachers)**  
**Figure 1a (n =19)**



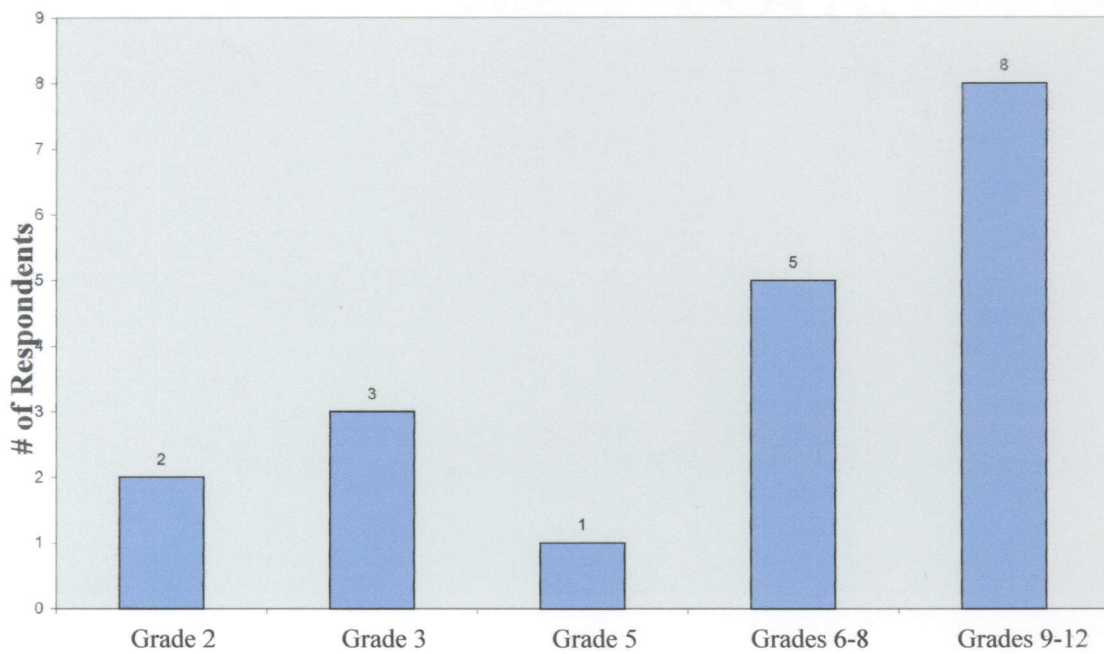
**Grade Levels (LMS)**  
**Figure 1b (n=39)**



Question two of the teachers' survey asked participants what grade level they taught. The responses were broken down by individual grade levels for grades preK-5, grades 6-8 were grouped together because some teachers reported teaching multiple grades, and grades 9-12 were grouped together for the same reason. The responses are presented in Figure 2.

### **Grade Levels Taught (Teachers)**

**Figure 2 (n=19)**



The second question on the library media specialists' survey was designed to determine if the respondents' school libraries were on fixed, flexible, or mixed schedules. The majority, 64.1% or 25 respondents, were in schools with flexible schedules. Six media specialists (15.4%) indicated that they were on fixed schedules. Eight participants (20.5%) reported being on mixed schedules.

The third question on both surveys asked respondents how long they had been in their current position. None of the teachers were in the first year of their current position. Nine teachers (47.4%) had been in their current position for two to five years. Eight teachers (42.1%) reported having been in their current job from six to ten years. Two participating teachers (10.5%) had been in their current position for more than ten years.

When asked about their time in their current positions, two of the media specialists (5.1%) reported being in their first year. Seventeen (43.6%) of the media specialists surveyed had been in their current position between two and five years. Eleven respondents (28.2%) reported between six and ten years in their current position. Nine (23.1%) of the media specialists who responded had been in their current position for more than ten years.

Question number four addressed the length of time that the participants were teachers or library media specialists. Three (15.8%) teacher respondents were teachers for two to five years. Eight teacher respondents (42.1%) indicated they had been teaching for six to ten years. There were also eight teacher respondents who had been teaching for more than ten years. Of the responding library media specialists, one was in his or her first year. Nine (23.7%) had been media specialists for two to five years.

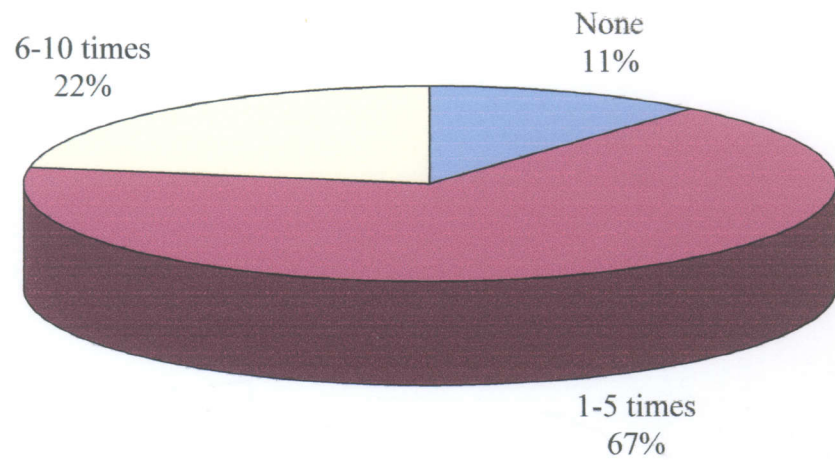
Thirteen (34.2%) had between six and ten years experience as a media specialist. Fifteen (39.5%) had been media specialists for ten years or longer. One media specialist skipped the question.

Questions five and six were designed to determine the frequency of collaboration between the classroom teachers and the library media specialists. Question five asked how many times collaboration had occurred during the period from August 2005 through January 2006 (Figures 3a and 3b). Of the 19 participating teachers, two indicated that they had participated in no collaborative projects (as shown in Figure 3a). Twelve teachers (66.7%) reported that they had participated between one and five times. Four teachers (22.2%) had participated in collaboration six to ten times during the studied period. No teachers reported having participated in more than ten collaborative projects. One teacher did not respond to the question.

Of the 39 library media specialists surveyed, fifteen (38.5) indicated that they had participated in one to five collaborative projects during the period from August 2005 until January 2006. Nine (23.1%) reported having done six to ten collaborative projects and 15 (38.5%) had participated in more than ten collaborative projects with classroom teachers, as shown in Figure 3b.

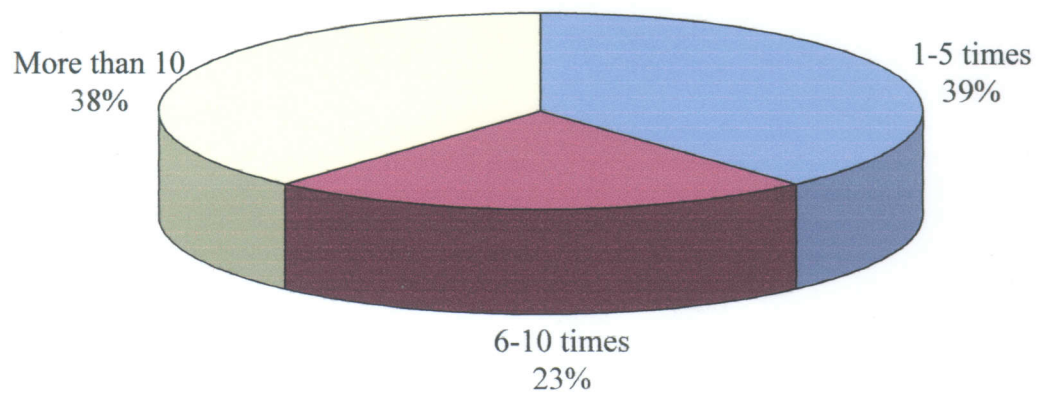
**Number of Collaboration Projects from August 2005-January 2006  
(Teachers)**

**Figure 3a (n=19)**



**Number of Collaboration Projects from August 2005 - January 2006  
(LMS)**

**Figure 3b (n=39)**





Question six asked the respondents to give the total number of collaborative projects that they had participated in during the three school years prior to the current one. One teacher had not participated in a collaborative project. Seven teachers (36.8%) reported participating in one to five collaborative projects. One teacher (5.3%) reported six-to-ten collaborations and ten teachers (52.6%) indicated they had participated in more than ten collaborative projects.

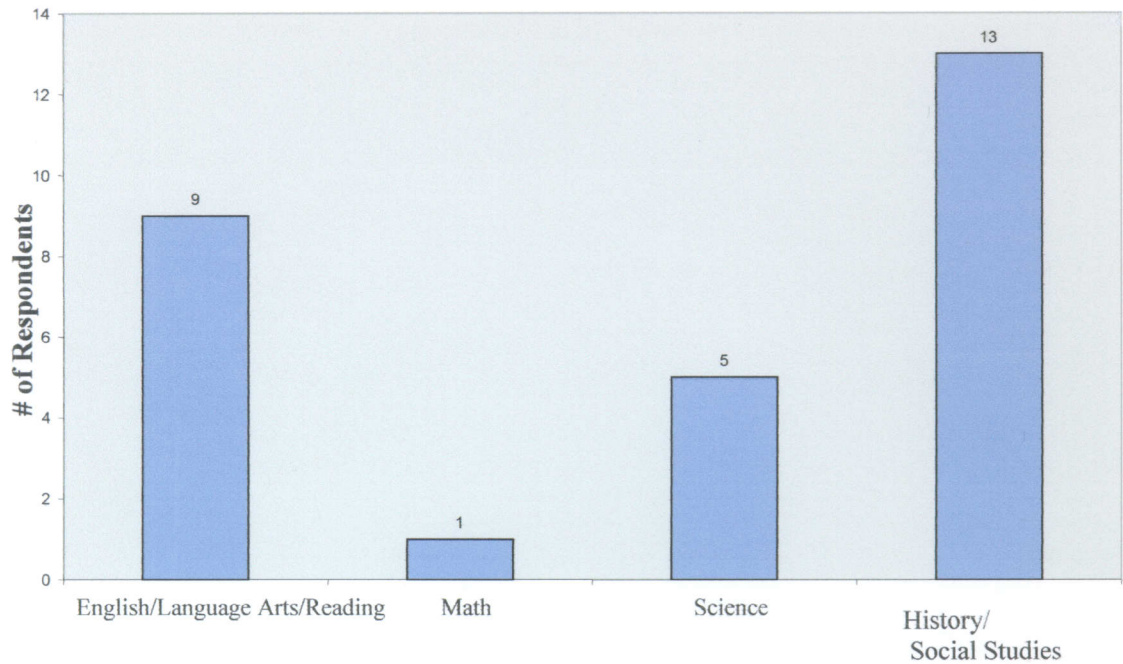
Of the 39 media specialists who participated, one reported having no collaborations during the three school years prior to the current one. An additional one reported having participated in one to five collaborative projects. Twelve media specialists (30.8%) had participated in six to ten collaborations while 23 (59%) had participated in more than ten collaborations. Two of the respondents marked not applicable as their response to this question.

Question seven asked participants who had not been involved in collaboration to give reasons for their decision to not participate. Of the 19 participants who were teachers, seven did not respond to the question and ten teachers (83.3%) indicated that they had participated in collaboration. One teacher indicated that the reason for not responding was that the fixed schedule did not allow an opportunity for collaboration. The other teacher reported that inadequate planning time was the reason for not participating in collaboration. Similarly, 25 of the media specialists (86.2%) reported that they had been involved in collaborative projects. Ten media specialists skipped the question. Of the four remaining media specialists, two stated that their fixed schedules did not allow an opportunity for collaboration. Two media specialists said they had not been able to arrange collaboration with teachers.

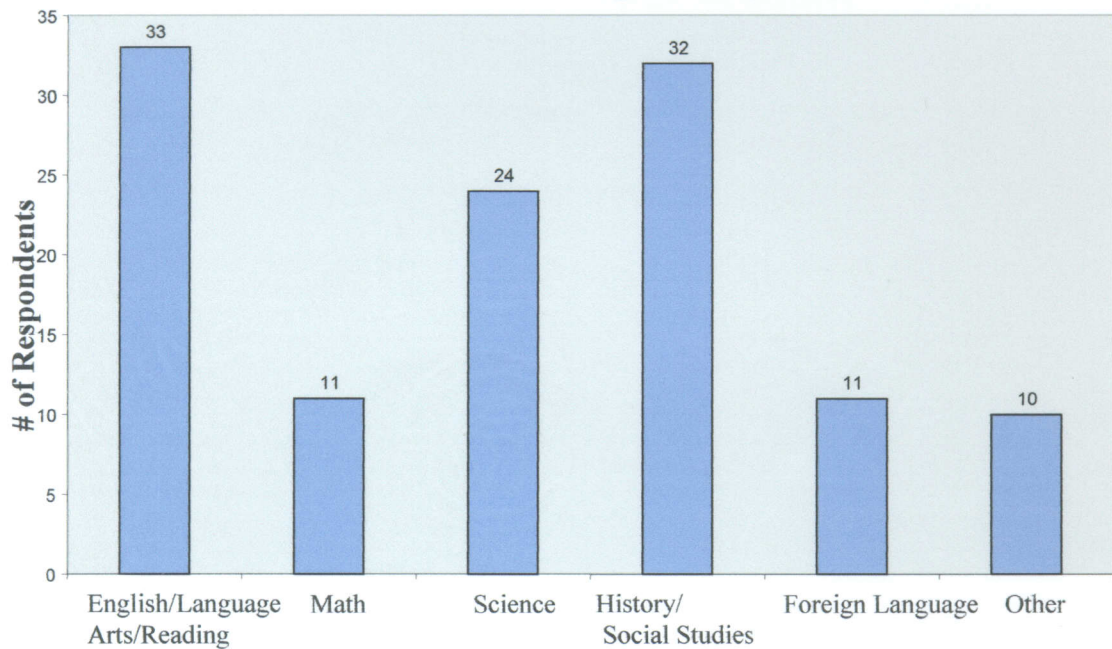
On question number eight, respondents were asked in what subject area(s) they had participated in a collaborative project. Respondents could mark more than one subject. Sixteen teachers responded to this question. Of the 16, nine (56.2%) had participated in collaboration in the English, language arts or reading subjects. One teacher (6.2%) had collaborated on a math project. Five teachers (31.2%) reported collaborating on science projects. Thirteen teachers (81.2%) reported collaborating on a history or social studies unit as shown in Figure 4a.

Thirty-four media specialists responded to question number eight as shown in Figure 4b. Of the responding media specialists, 33 (97.1%) had participated with classroom teachers on lessons in English, language arts or reading. Eleven (32.4%) media specialists reported working collaboratively on math lessons. Twenty-four (70.6%) had participated in collaborations in the subject of science. Thirty-two (94.1%) had collaborated on history or social studies projects. Eleven media specialists had worked collaboratively on foreign language lessons or units. Ten respondents reported having participated in collaborations on other topics, which included health, music, character education, technology, Navajo language and culture, and home economics.

**Subjects in Which Collaboration Occurred (Teachers)**  
**Figure 4a (n=16)**



**Subjects in Which Collaboration Occurred (LMS)**  
**Figure 4b (n=34)**



Teachers and media specialists were then asked to report on their actual use of specific collaborative activities. Question nine on the teachers' survey asked "during the period from August 2005 to January 2006, how many times did you participate in the following collaborative activities with the library media specialist?" There were five activities listed and participants were asked to mark the appropriate number of times that they had participated in the activity. Similarly, the media specialists were asked "during the period from August 2005 to January 2006, how many times did you participate in the following collaborative activities with a classroom teacher?" Table in 1a shows the responses of teachers. Only 17 teachers responded to this question. There were two non-responses. Table 1b represents the library media specialists' responses.

Not all participating library media specialists marked each item on the list therefore the totals on Tables 1a and 1b do not always equal the total number of respondents. Due to rounding percentages may not total 100%.

**Number of Collaborations by Levels Occurring Between  
Classroom Teachers and Library Media Specialists from August 2005-  
January 2006 (Teachers)**

**Table 1a (n=17)**

During the period from August 2005 to January 2006, how many times did you participate in the following collaborative activities with the LMS?						
	None	1-2	3-5	6-9	10+	N/A
LMS gathered materials for my use with a lesson or unit	6% (1)	35% (6)	41% (7)	18% (3)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Collaborated with LMS to design objectives of a lesson or unit	24% (4)	59% (10)	12% (2)	0% (0)	0% (0)	6% (1)
Collaborated with LMS to plan a lesson or unit	12% (2)	76% (13)	6% (1)	6% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Collaborated with LMS to teach a lesson or unit	12% (2)	65% (11)	18% (3)	6% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Collaborated with LMS to evaluate a lesson or unit	53% (9)	35% (6)	6% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	6% (1)

**Number of Collaborations by Levels Occurring Between Classroom  
Teachers and Library Media Specialists from August 2005- January  
2006 (LMS)**

**Table 1b (n=34)**

During the period from August 2005 to January 2006, how many times did you participate in the following collaborative activities with a classroom teacher?						
	None	1-2	3-5	6-9	10+	N/A
Gathered materials for teacher's use with a lesson or unit	0% (0)	19% (6)	19% (6)	6% (2)	56% (18)	0% (0)
Collaborated with teacher to design objectives of a lesson or unit	18% (6)	30% (10)	27% (9)	15% (5)	9% (3)	6% (1)
Collaborated with teacher to plan a lesson or unit	9% (3)	24% (8)	33% (11)	15% (5)	18% (6)	0% (0)
Collaborated with teacher to teach a lesson or unit	3% (1)	27% (9)	21% (7)	15% (5)	33% (11)	0% (0)
Collaborated with teacher to evaluate a lesson or unit	28% (9)	25% (8)	25% (8)	9% (3)	9% (3)	3% (1)

Question 10 on the teachers' survey asked respondents how the factors of planning time, lead time, communication with library media specialists, administrative support, availability of ideas, and referrals from colleagues encouraged or discouraged their participation in collaborative activities. The teachers' responses are shown in Table 2a. Question 10 on the library media specialists' survey asked a parallel question regarding their interaction with classroom teachers. The media specialists' responses are detailed in Table 2b.

Not all participating teachers and library media specialists marked each item on the list therefore the totals on Tables 2a and 2b do not always equal the total number of respondents. Due to rounding percentages may not total 100%.

**Factors that Encourage or Discourage Collaboration Between  
Classroom Teachers and Library Media Specialists (Teachers)**

**Table 2a (n=17)**

To what extent, if any, have the following factors encouraged or discouraged your participation in collaborative activities with the LMS?					
	Strongly Encouraged	Encouraged	Neither encouraged nor discouraged	Discouraged	Strongly discouraged
Amount of planning time	12% (2)	6% (1)	53% (9)	24% (4)	6% (1)
Amount of lead time	12% (2)	6% (1)	65% (11)	12% (2)	6% (1)
Communication with LMS	41% (7)	41% (7)	18% (3)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Administration's support	12% (2)	24% (4)	65% (11)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Availability of ideas	24% (4)	47% (8)	24% (4)	0% (0)	6% (1)
Referrals	12% (2)	25% (4)	62% (10)	0% (0)	0% (0)

**Factors that Encourage or Discourage Collaboration Between  
Classroom Teachers and Library Media Specialists (LMS)**

**Table 2b (n=33)**

To what extent, if any, have the following factors encouraged or discouraged your participation in collaborative activities with a classroom teacher?					
	Strongly Encouraged	Encouraged	Neither encouraged nor discouraged	Discouraged	Strongly discouraged
Amount of planning time	3% (1)	27% (9)	30% (10)	30% (10)	9% (3)
Amount of lead time	6% (2)	28% (9)	38% (12)	25% (8)	3% (1)
Communication with teacher(s)	33% (11)	36% (12)	12% (4)	15% (5)	3% (1)
Administration's support	19% (6)	31% (10)	44% (14)	6% (2)	0% (0)
Availability of ideas	33% (11)	42% (14)	18% (6)	6% (2)	0% (0)
Referrals	24% (8)	30% (10)	39% (13)	6% (2)	0% (0)

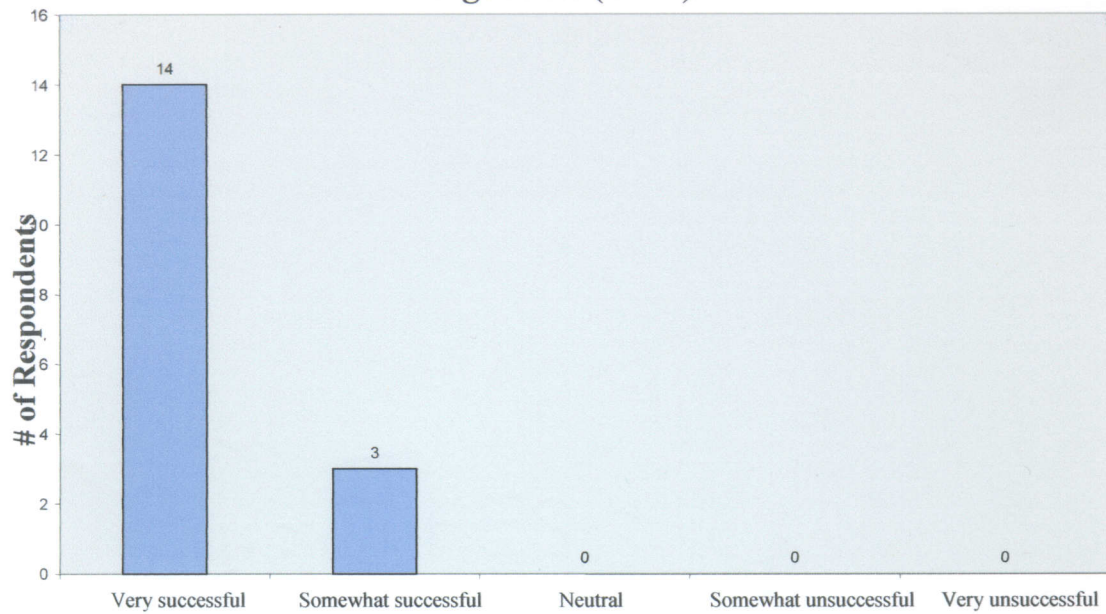
Question 11 was designed to measure the teachers' and media specialists' opinions of the success of previous collaborative activities. Of the 17 teachers who responded, 82.4% (14) indicated that they rated their previous collaborations as very successful. Three of the teachers (17.6%) scored the previous collaborative experiences as somewhat successful. None of the teachers rated their experiences as somewhat unsuccessful or very unsuccessful, as shown in Figure 5a.

Nineteen of the 33 media specialists (48%) who responded to Question 11 rated their previous and/or current collaborations as very successful. Twelve (36.4%) rated their collaborations as somewhat successful. One respondent (3%) marked neutral and one indicated somewhat unsuccessful, as shown in Figure 5b. Six participants skipped the question.



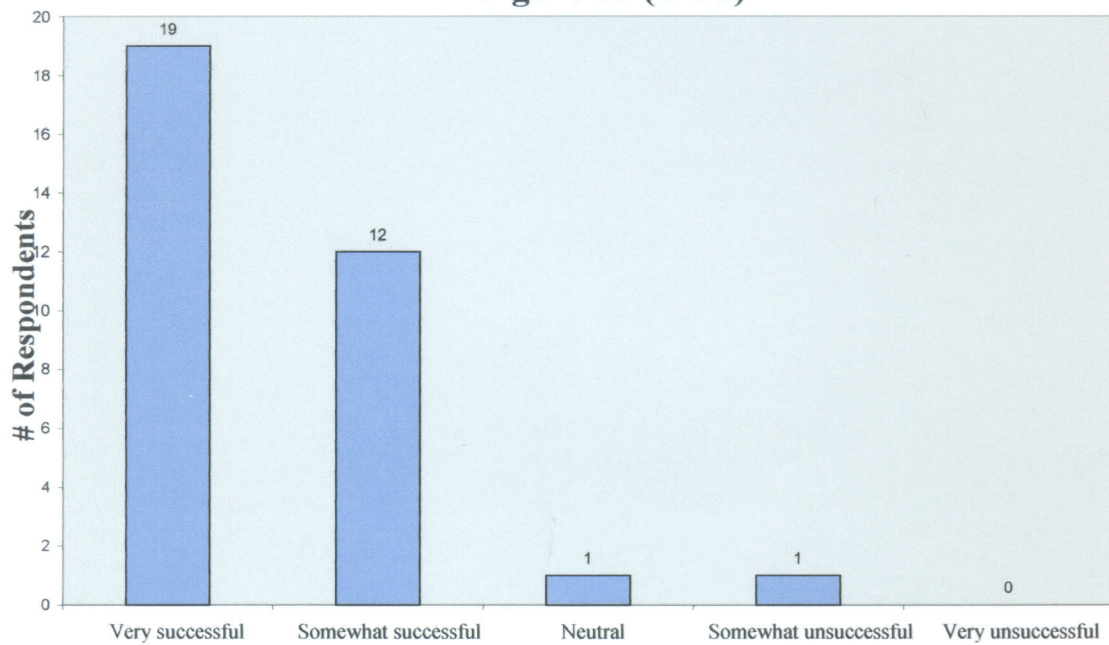
### Rate Collaboration Experience (Teachers)

Figure 5a (n=17)



### Rate Collaboration Experience (LMS)

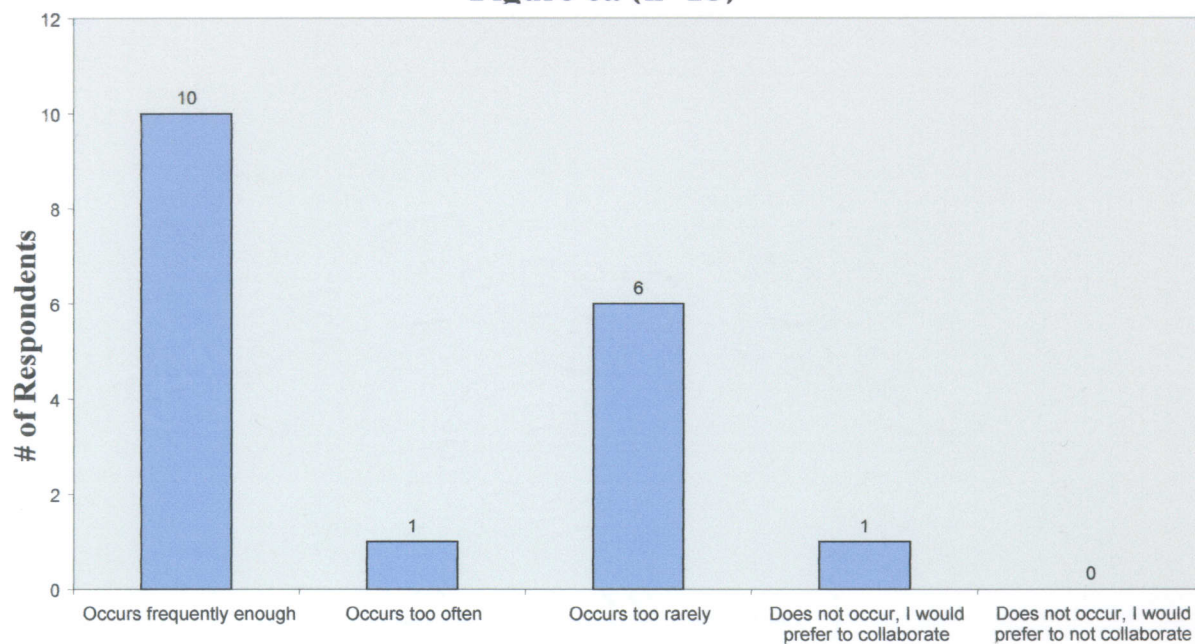
Figure 5b (n=33)



The final question on the survey asked for participants to rate the desirability of frequency of their collaboration. The results of the teachers' survey, as shown in Figure 6a, indicated that of the 18 teachers who responded to Question 12, ten teachers (55.6%) believed that collaboration occurred frequently enough. One teacher (5.6%) opined that collaboration occurred too often, while 33.3% (6) of the participating teachers felt that collaboration did not occur often enough. One teacher indicated that collaboration did not occur but that he or she would prefer to participate in collaboration. Thirty-five media specialists responded to question 12, as shown in Figure 6b. The results of the library media specialists' survey indicated that 25.7% (9) of the respondents felt collaboration occurred frequently enough. Twenty-four (68.6%) of the media specialists said that collaboration occurred but not often enough. Two (5.7%) said that collaboration did not occur and that they would prefer to collaborate. None said that collaboration occurred too frequently or that they would prefer to not collaborate.

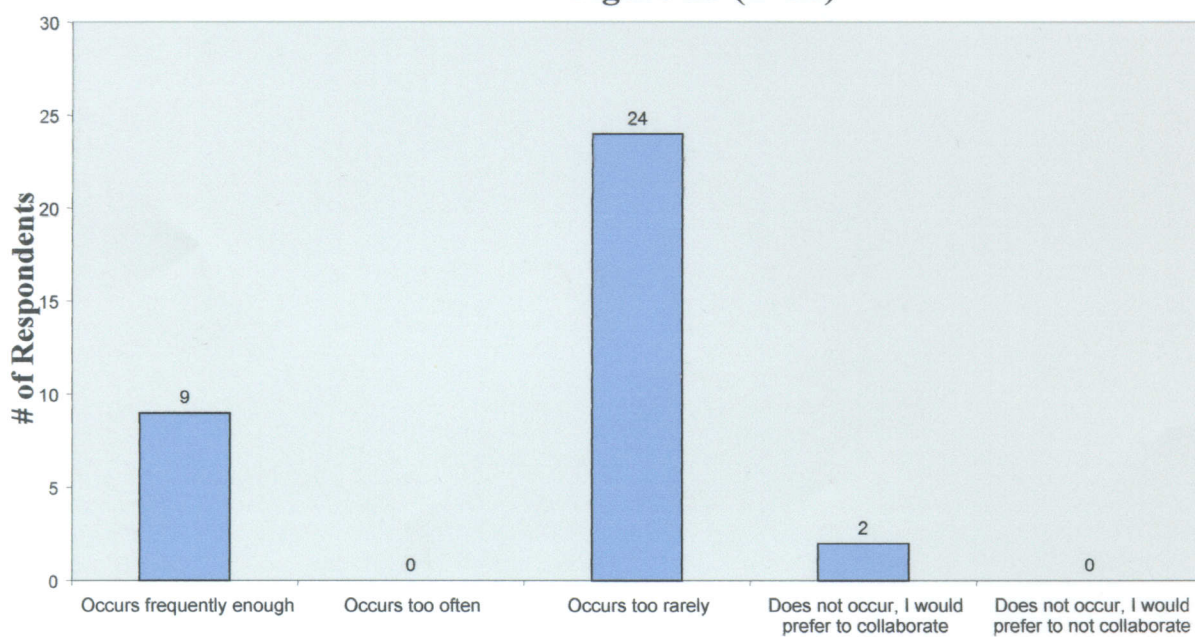
### Opinion of Frequency of Collaboration (Teachers)

Figure 6a (n=18)



### Opinion of Frequency of Collaboration (LMS)

Figure 6b (n=35)



## Summary

The findings of the research indicated results that were expected on some questions while the results for other questions were unexpected. As anticipated, the most common reason teachers were discouraged from collaboration was the amount of planning time available. Similarly, some media specialists indicated the lack of planning time to be the greatest deterrent, followed closely by the amount of lead time before starting collaborative activities. Of particular interest, 47% of the teachers surveyed said that availability of ideas for utilizing collaboration was the factor that most encouraged their participation. Of those teachers surveyed, 41% said that communication with the library media specialist strongly encouraged their use of collaboration and an additional 41% said that the communication encouraged their use of collaboration.

As expected the teachers reported a higher frequency of collaborative activity at the level of having the media specialist gather materials for use with a classroom lesson or unit than at the level of collaborating with the media specialist to evaluate lessons or units.

In the next chapter the results and the ramifications regarding the original research questions presented in Chapter I are discussed.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary

The current research examined the practices of collaboration between teachers and school library media specialists. It also examined what levels of collaboration occurred between the two groups and what factors influenced their decisions regarding use of collaborative activities. The overall results indicated that collaboration did occur between the school media specialists and classroom teachers who participated in the study and that most felt satisfied with the results of their collaborative activities.

#### Research Questions

*What were the practices of collaboration used by school library media specialists and classroom teachers?*

The majority of respondents in both study groups did participate in teacher-library media specialist collaboration during either the current school year or during the three school years previous to the current one. Of the two teacher respondents who had not participated in collaborative activities, one reported the cause to be the fixed schedule did not allow an opportunity for collaboration and the other indicated that inadequate planning time contributed to the decision to not participate in collaborative activities.

Of the 39 library media specialists who participated in the survey, two indicated that their fixed schedule was responsible for the lack of collaborative activities; one responded that administration did not support the use of collaboration between library

media specialist and classroom teachers; and two reported that they had not been able to arrange a collaborative activity with the classroom teachers. These findings were concurrent with the research reviewed in preparation for this study.

The respondents of both studies indicated that English/language arts and history/social studies classes were the subjects in which they were most likely to participate in collaborative activities. When asked in which subjects they had collaborated during the current school year, 13 of the 19 responding teachers answered history/social studies and nine reported collaborative activities in the English/language arts classes. Similarly 32 of 39 school media specialists indicated they had participated in collaborative activities in the history/social studies subjects during the current school year and 33 reported collaborating in English/language arts classes.

*What levels of collaboration were used by media specialists and classroom teachers?*

Teachers were asked to identify how often during the current school year they had participated in collaborative activities with teachers. Of the five categories or levels of collaboration, the task that they reported the highest frequency of use was the media specialist's collaboration by gathering materials. Eighteen percent of those surveyed reported having used the media specialist's services for the task of gathering materials between six and nine times during the current school year. The teachers reported fewer collaboration activities as the level of collaboration increased. When asked how often they collaborated with the library media specialist to design objectives of a lesson or unit, the majority of teachers (59%) reported 1-2 times. Similarly when asked how often they had collaborated with the library media specialist to plan a lesson or unit, 76% selected the 1-2 answer. Sixty-five percent of the surveyed teachers marked 1-2 in response to the

question regarding their collaborating with the media specialist to teach a lesson or unit. The majority of teachers asked (53%) said they had not participated on collaborative activities in which the library media specialist was involved in the evaluation of a lesson or unit. This data indicated that teachers were more likely to participate with media specialists on a “gathering” level than at an “evaluating” level.

The parallel survey to which the library media specialists responded indicated some similarities and some differences to the teachers’ surveys. Fifty-six percent of the media specialists surveyed said they had participated with teachers on the gathering task ten or more times. As with the teachers, this was the highest frequency task. A larger percentage (33%) of the media specialists surveyed reported having participated in ten or more collaboration activities in they were involved with the teacher to teach a lesson or unit.

This can, in part, be contributed to the fact that library media specialists provided a combined total of collaborations which presumably involved multiple teachers while each teacher was reporting his or her own individual participation. It should also be noted that there were 39 library media specialists who responded and 19 teachers, therefore presumably not all of the teachers who had participated in collaborations with the media specialists were respondents in the survey.

*What factors influenced library media specialists’ use of collaboration?*

The results indicated that a slightly higher percentage of media specialists were discouraged from collaboration by the time they had available than were those who were encouraged. Thirty percent of the media specialists who responded to the question on the survey indicated that the amount of planning time for collaborative activities either

encouraged or strongly encouraged their use of collaboration. On the opposite end of the spectrum, 39% indicated that the amount of planning time discouraged or strongly discouraged their participation in collaboration.

Similarly the percentages were fairly evenly distributed when media specialists were asked to indicate how the amount of lead time encouraged or discouraged their use of collaborative activities. While 34% of the media specialists indicated they were either encouraged or strongly encouraged by the amount of lead time, an additional 28% indicated they were either discouraged or strongly discouraged from collaborating based on the availability of lead time. Of the media specialists surveyed, 75% said they were either encouraged or strongly encouraged to collaborate based on the availability of ideas. Seventy-four percent indicated that the referrals from colleagues either encouraged or strongly encouraged their use of collaboration. These results indicated that the library media specialists were more encouraged by the availability of ideas and the referrals than by the issues of timing. Communication with teachers and administrative support fell into the middle ground with 69% having reported being encouraged or strongly encouraged by the communication with teachers and 50% having reported being encouraged by administrative support.

*What factors influenced classroom teachers' use or non-use of collaboration?*

Surprisingly, the majority of teachers (53%) who participated in the current research did not report the amount of planning time or amount of lead time to be either encouraging or discouraging. Sixty-five percent reported that the amount of lead time and administration's support neither encouraged nor discouraged their participation in collaboration with the library media specialists. According to the teachers the two most



encouraging factors were the amount of communication with the library media specialist and the availability of ideas. These results emphasized an importance of communication and referrals that was not observed in the literature reviewed in preparation for the study.

### Discussion and Conclusions

The overall results of this study indicated that the majority of the teachers and library specialists in this limited sample did utilize teacher-library media specialist collaboration. Most of the library media specialists surveyed indicated that collaboration occurred too rarely. While most of the teachers surveyed indicated that collaboration occurred frequently enough, about one-third of the teachers indicated that collaboration occurred too rarely.

One point of particular interest to the researcher was that all of the teachers who responded to the survey question regarding their satisfaction with collaboration rated their collaborative activities as either very successful or somewhat successful. Similarly, almost all (94%) of the 33 library media specialists who responded to this question indicated that their collaborative activities had been either very successful or somewhat successful.

### Significance

This study was relevant because it added to knowledge base for teachers, media specialists, and administrators about the benefits of collaboration, as well as detailing some of the obstacles which occurred in the use of collaborative planning. Expanding the body of research results about collaborative efforts can create a more effective use of teacher and library media specialist collaboration.

### Recommendations for Future Study

Of the 19 teachers who participated in the survey, none were in their first year of teaching. It was anticipated that first year teachers would have participated in some level of collaboration. While this could be attributed to the limited sample size, it would be interesting to know whether the lack of participation by first year teacher was because: there were no first year teachers in the schools where the media specialists volunteered to participate in the survey; the first year teachers were not participating in collaboration with the media specialist; they did not choose to participate in the survey; or, they were not recruited by the media specialist to participate in the survey. Possible future research could be conducted to examine the practices and participation of first-year teachers in collaborative activities with the library media specialist and how those practices and participations compare and differ from the practices of teachers with more years of teaching experience.

The small sample, due to the response to the request for volunteers, was a limitation to this research. Similar research conducted by contacting media specialists and teachers in a different manner, such as contacting those employed in a particular district or region, would be expected to provide additional data and could be considered as an option for future research.

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## APPENDIX A

### Invitation to Participate Posted on NJASL Listserv

Invitation to Participate Posted on NJASL Listserv

Subject Line – Collaboration Research

Attention all public and private media specialists

Collaboration between the school library media specialist and teachers is an essential component in school library media programs. While some research has been done to show the importance of collaboration, I am studying the actual behaviors of both teachers and school library media specialists in the collaboration process.

I am a graduate student at Rowan University in Glassboro, New Jersey and am currently working on my thesis to complete my degree in public and school librarianship. The topic of my thesis is collaboration between school media specialists and classroom teachers. The purpose of this thesis is to understand the practices of collaboration, the attitudes towards collaboration and the factors which may influence the decision to participate or not participate in collaborative activities.

I am inviting library media specialists and teachers in public and private schools to participate. If you decide to participate please ask 3-5 teachers in their schools to participate in a parallel survey designed for classroom teachers.

The survey is web-based. Responses are all confidential.

If you choose to participate, please go to <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=643011659907> and complete the library media specialists' survey.

Also, would you please forward the following link to 3-5 teachers in your school? I am interested in both the opinions of teachers who participate in collaborative activities and of those who do not participate in collaborative activities. The teachers you select are asked to complete the Teachers' Survey at: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=950711661798>

If you have questions regarding the survey, please contact me at [rmiller311@comcast.net](mailto:rmiller311@comcast.net) or contact Dr. Marilyn Shontz at [shontz@rowan.edu](mailto:shontz@rowan.edu). If you would like to receive the results of the survey, please send me an email.

Thank you for your assistance,

Sincerely,  
Carol Elizabeth Miller  
Graduate Student  
School and Public Library Program  
Rowan University

## APPENDIX B

### Invitation to Participate Posted on LM\_Net Listserv

Invitation to Participate Posted on LM\_Net Listserv

TARGET: Collaboration Research

Collaboration between the school library media specialist and teachers is an essential component in school library media programs. While some research has been done to show the importance of collaboration, I am studying the actual behaviors of both teachers and school library media specialists in the collaboration process.

I am a graduate student at Rowan University in Glassboro, New Jersey and am currently working on my thesis to complete my degree in public and school librarianship. The topic of my thesis is collaboration between school media specialists and classroom teachers. The purpose of this thesis is to understand the practices of collaboration, the attitudes towards collaboration and the factors which may influence the decision to participate or not participate in collaborative activities.

I am inviting library media specialists and teachers in public and private schools to participate. If you decide to participate please ask 3-5 teachers in your school to participate in a parallel survey designed for classroom teachers.

The survey is web-based. Responses are all confidential.

If you choose to participate, please go to <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=643011659907> and complete the library media specialists' survey.

Also, would you please forward the following link to 3-5 teachers in your school? I am interested in both the opinions of teachers who participate in collaborative activities and of those who do not participate in collaborative activities. The teachers you select are asked to complete the Teachers' Survey at: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=950711661798>

If you have questions regarding the survey, please contact me at [rmiller311@comcast.net](mailto:rmiller311@comcast.net) or contact Dr. Marilyn Shontz at [shontz@rowan.edu](mailto:shontz@rowan.edu). If you would like to receive the results of the survey, please send me an email.

Thank you for your assistance,

Sincerely,  
Carol Elizabeth Miller  
Graduate Student  
School and Public Library Program  
Rowan University



## APPENDIX C

### School Media Specialists' Survey on Collaboration Between Teachers and School Media Specialists

# **School Media Specialists' Survey on Collaboration Between Teachers and School Media Specialists**

## **Privacy and Definitions**

This survey is being administered as part of a graduate course research project at Rowan University. Your cooperation and participation are important to the success of the project and are greatly appreciated. If you choose to participate, please understand that all responses are strictly confidential and no personally identifiable information is being collected.

**DEFINITION:** Collaboration is defined as "the cooperative efforts between teachers and library media specialists to plan, develop, and implement information literacy skills into classroom curriculum" (McCain and Merrill, 2001).

## **Demographics**

### **1. What grade levels attend your school?**

### **2. Which best describes your media center's scheduling?**

☐ Fixed

☐ Flexible

☐ Mixed

### **3. How long have you been in your current position?**

☐ 1st year

☐ 2-5 years

☐ 6-10 years

☐ More than 10 years

**4. How long have you been a library media specialist?**

- ☐ 1st year
- ☐ 2-5 years
- ☐ 6-10 years
- ☐ More than 10 years

**5. During the period from August 2005-January 2006, how many times did you participate in a collaborative project(s) with a classroom teacher?**

- ☐ None
- ☐ 1-5
- ☐ 6-10
- ☐ More than 10
- ☐ Not applicable

**6. During the three school years prior to the current one, how many times did you participate in a collaborative project(s) with a classroom teacher? (Please mark the total for the three years. If unsure of exact total, please estimate.)**

- ☐ None
- ☐ 1-5
- ☐ 6-10
- ☐ More than 10
- ☐ Not applicable



**7. If you have not participated in collaboration during the current school year or during three school years prior to the current school year, which of the following reasons best describes your decision to not participate.**

- ☐ Fixed schedule does not allow opportunity for collaboration
- ☐ Inadequate planning time
- ☐ Administration does not support use of collaboration between library media specialist and classroom teachers
- ☐ I have not been able to arrange collaboration with teacher(s)
- ☐ I do not see the value of collaboration
- ☐ I have participated in collaboration

### **Participation in Collaboration**

If you have not participated in any collaborative activities with a classroom teacher during the current school year or the three school years prior to the current one, please skip to question 12.

**8. In what subject areas have you participated in a collaborative project with classroom teacher(s) during the current school year and/or the three prior school years? (Please mark all that apply).**

- ☐ English/Language Arts/Reading
- ☐ Math
- ☐ Science
- ☐ History/Social Studies
- ☐ Foreign Language
- ☐ Other (please specify)

**9. During the period from August 2005 to January 2006, how many times did you participate in the following collaborative activities with a classroom teacher? (Please mark one answer per row).**

None

1-2

3-5

6-9

10 or  
more

not  
applicable

**Gathered materials for teacher's use with a classroom lesson or unit**

Collaborated with classroom teacher(s) to design the objectives of a classroom lesson or unit?

Collaborated with classroom teacher(s) to plan lesson and learning activities

Collaborated with classroom teacher(s) to teach a lesson or unit



Collaborated  
with  
classroom  
teacher(s)  
to evaluate  
a lesson or  
unit

**10. To what extent, if any, have the following factors encouraged or discouraged your participation in collaborative activities with a classroom teacher? (Please mark one answer per row).**

	Strongly encouraged	Encouraged	Neither encouraged nor discouraged	Discouraged	Strongly discouraged
Amount of planning time	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Amount of lead time before starting collaborative activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Communication with teacher(s)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Administration's support	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Availability of ideas for utilizing collaboration	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Referrals or recommendations from colleagues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**11. How would you rate your previous or current collaborative activities with classroom teachers?**

- ☐ Very successful
- ☐ Somewhat successful
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Somewhat unsuccessful
- ☐ Very unsuccessful

**12. Which of the following best describes your opinion regarding the frequency of collaboration between you and classroom teachers in your school?**

- ☐ Collaboration occurs frequently enough
- ☐ Collaboration occurs too often
- ☐ Collaboration occurs but not often enough
- ☐ Collaboration does not occur, I would prefer to collaborate
- ☐ Collaboration does not occur, I would prefer to not collaborate

## APPENDIX D

### Teachers' Survey on Collaboration Between Teachers and School Media Specialists



# Teachers' Survey on Collaboration Between Teachers and School Media Specialists

## Privacy and definitions

This survey is being administered as part of a graduate course research project at Rowan University. Your cooperation and participation are important to the success of the project and are greatly appreciated. If you choose to participate, please understand that all responses are strictly confidential and no personally identifiable information is being collected.

**DEFINITION:** Collaboration is defined as "the cooperative efforts between teachers and library media specialists to plan, develop, and implement information literacy skills into classroom curriculum" (McCain and Merrill, 2001).

## Demographics

**1. What grade levels attend your school?**

**2. What grade level do you teach?**

**3. How long have you been in your current position?**

- ☐ 1st year
- ☐ 2-5 years
- ☐ 6-10 years
- ☐ More than 10 years

**4. How long have you been a classroom teacher?**

- ☐ 1st year
- ☐ 2-5 years
- ☐ 6-10 years
- ☐ More than 10 years

**5. During the period from August 2005-January 2006, how many times did you participate in a collaborative project or projects with the library media specialist (LMS)?**

- ☐ None
- ☐ 1-5
- ☐ 6-10
- ☐ More than 10
- ☐ Not applicable

**6. During the three school years prior to the current one, how many times did you participate in a collaborative project or projects with the library media specialist? (Please mark the total for the three years. If unsure of the exact total, please estimate).**

- ☐ None
- ☐ 1-5
- ☐ 6-10
- ☐ More than 10
- ☐ Not applicable



**7. If you have not participated in collaboration during the current school year or during any of the three school years prior to the current school year, which of the reasons best describes your decision to not participate?**

- ☐ Fixed schedule does not allow opportunity for collaboration
- ☐ Inadequate planning time
- ☐ Administration does not support use of collaboration between library media specialist and classroom teachers
- ☐ I have not been asked
- ☐ I do not see the value of collaboration
- ☐ I have participated in collaboration

### **Participation in Collaboration**

If you have not participated in any collaborative activities with the school library media specialist during the current school year or during the three years prior to the current school year, please skip to question #12.

**8. In what subject area(s) have you participated in a collaborative project or projects with the library media specialist during the current school year and/or the three prior school years? (Please mark all that apply).**

- ☐ English/Language Arts/Reading
- ☐ Math
- ☐ Science
- ☐ History/Social Studies
- ☐ Foreign Language

**9. During the period from August 2005 to January 2006, how many times did you participate in the following collaborative activities with the library media specialist? (Please mark one answer per row)**

None	1-2	3-5	6-9	10 or more	Not applicable
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Library media specialist gathered materials for my use with a classroom lesson or unit

Collaborated with library media specialist to design the objectives of a classroom lesson or unit

Collaborated with library media specialist to plan a lesson and learning activities

Collaborated with library media specialist to teach a lesson or unit



Collaborated  
with library  
media  
specialist to  
evaluate  
lesson(s) or  
unit(s)

**10. To what extent, if any, have the following factors encouraged or discouraged your participation in collaborative activities with the library media specialist? (Please mark one answer per row)**

	Strongly encouraged	Encouraged	Neither encouraged nor discouraged	Discouraged	Strongly discouraged
Amount of planning time	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Amount of lead time before starting collaborative activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Communication with Library Media Specialist	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Administration's support	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Availability of ideas for utilizing collaboration	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Referrals or recommendations from colleagues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**11. How would you rate your previous and/or current collaborative activities with the library media specialist?**

- ☐ Very successful
- ☐ Somewhat successful
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Somewhat unsuccessful
- ☐ Very unsuccessful

**12. Which of the following best describes your opinion regarding the frequency of collaboration between you and the library media specialist in your school?**

- ☐ Collaboration occurs frequently enough
- ☐ Collaboration occurs too often
- ☐ Collaboration occurs but not often enough
- ☐ Collaboration does not occur, I would prefer to collaborate
- ☐ Collaboration does not occur, I would prefer to not collaborate

